



Revisiting Punjab's Transformative Journey: 1947 to 1966

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Abstract

Punjab, the “Land of five rivers”, has played a major role in the history of India and had left a deep imprint on the course of Indian History. This imprint on Indian History is due to the people of Punjab, who through their courage and patriotism have carved out an important place for themselves. To understand the nature and dynamics of Punjab history in its true perspective, it is important to study the people of Punjab; their historical, cultural and religious background and their political heritage. In 1947, India got Independence from the British rule and at the same time it was partitioned on the on the basis of two nation theory. In this partition Punjab had to pay a heavy price both in term of human and territorial loss. The joy and achievement of independence for Punjab was marred by the holocaust of partition. After partition Punjab presented a very gloomy and downright dismal picture. Migration of refugees significantly altered the communal composition of Indian Punjab. It also shook the administrative, economic and political machinery of the province to its foundation and brought in its wake a host complicated problems. The division of Punjab on communal lines spread a sense of indignation and frustration among the Sikhs because the hopes of creating a Sikh State in Independent India rose by the Sikh leaders and supported by the congress and Hindu leaders had not been fulfilled. The Sikhs felt that they had been given a raw deal in the distribution of territory between the Hindus and the Muslims giving the expression to this feeling hence the demand for a *Punjabi Suba* was made and in its struggle for the achievement of Punjabi Suba, the Akali Dal

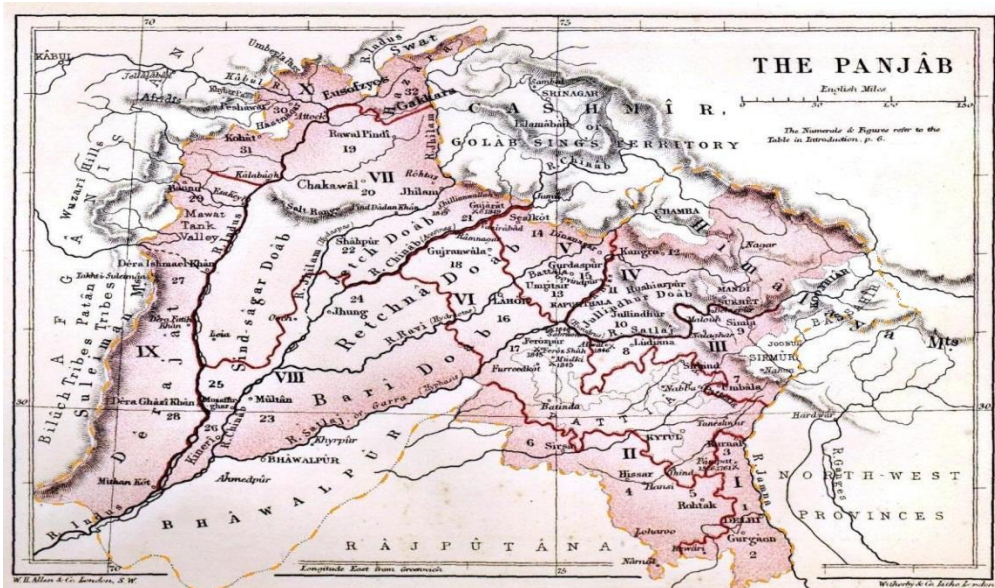
employed a variety of strategies, due to which on 21st March 1966 reorganization of the Punjab took place and Punjab was further trifurcated.

Keywords: Partition, Independence, Demographic shifts, Integration, Political evolution, Language agitation, Reorganization

Introduction

Punjab, the “Land of Five Rivers”, has played a major role in the history of India and has left a deep imprint on the course of Indian History. This imprint on Indian History is due to the people of Punjab, who through their courage and patriotism have carved out an important place for themselves (Singh, 1981). To understand the nature and dynamics of Punjab's history from its true perspective, it is important to study the people of Punjab; their historical, cultural, and religious background and their political heritage.

In 1947, India gained Independence from British rule and at the same time it was partitioned on the on the basis of two nation theory which was initiated and campaigned by the Muslim League but later on due to the circumstances Congress also had to accept it. In this partition, Punjab had to pay a heavy price both in terms of human and territorial loss. In terms of territorial loss the new province of Punjab was left with only thirteen districts out of twenty-nine districts of undivided Punjab, as the entire Muslim majority districts were transferred to Pakistan and the non-Muslim majority districts remained in India. India got only 34 percent of the area with 47 percent of the population (Singh, 1981). The joy and achievement of independence for Punjab was marred by the holocaust of partition. After partition Punjab presented a very gloomy and downright dismal picture. “It looked as if the same Promethean spirit had painted it in a conclusion of deep agony. Five million refugees, distraught by harrowing memories, stalked the land without hope or faith in anything. The gloom of an earthquake hung over the province.” (Punjab Government, 1956).



Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Punjab_Province_%28British_India%29#/media/File:Po1880Panjab3.jpg

The migration of refugees significantly altered the communal composition of Indian Punjab (Singh, 1981). (The boundaries of East Punjab were redefined in accordance with the Radcliff Award which was announced on 18th August 1947). In united Punjab, i.e. in Punjab before partition, the Hindus constituted a minority with 26 percent of the population and the Sikhs were only 13 percent of the population but after partition the Hindu became a majority with 64 percent of the population and the Sikhs became a sizeable minority with 33 percent of the population (1951 census). The erstwhile majority communities, i.e. the Muslim were now almost completely eliminated as a political entity (Norang, 1986).

The partition of Punjab at the time of independence shook the administrative, economic, and political machinery of the province to its foundation and brought in its wake a host of complicated problems. The flood of human misery witnessed nepotism, corruption, bribery, maladministration, and communalism in the administrative services. The economy of the state had been completely disrupted as partition was a severe blow to industry and business and depleted the strength of skilled labour. The pre-partition communalism and post-partition administrative chaos were nurtured by the confused policies and politics of the faction-ridden ruling party. This all left the masses in a dilemma. (Chauhan, 1995).

But soon, it was found that adverse circumstances and grueling struggle created a capacity in them (masses), to face ominous conditions, however, formidable they might be. In no time, it was found that instead of

being liabilities they became an asset to the Punjab (East). The displaced Punjab farmers created blossoming orchards out of these new lands. The government also extended massive assistance to the rehabilitation of the refugees. “It is sufficient to record that the Punjab which had been the earliest home of the Aryans settlers, and from whence the Vedic culture had spread through. India proved once again to be the starting point of a new resurgence that came to the people of this country after centuries of slavery” (Rai, 1965).

The division of Punjab on communal lines spread a sense of indignation and frustration among the Sikhs because the hopes of creating a Sikh State in Independent India (Azad Punjab / Sikhistan) rose by the Sikh leaders and supported by the Congress and Hindu leaders had not been fulfilled. The Sikhs felt that they had been given a raw deal in the distribution of territory between the Hindus and the Muslims, giving the expression to this feeling Master Tara Singh said.

“Every minority except Sikhs has been given justice. The Muslims demanded Pakistan, and they got it, the scheduled castes wanted representation on a population basis with the right to contest additional seats and they got it. The Sikhs demanded that they would not (like to) be dominated by any single community and they were being mocked for repeating the same demand which the Hindus supported before partition – with which the Congress sympathizes” (Punjab Government, 1956).

Though the changed demographic situation in Punjab was favorable to the Sikhs, yet in a free India which was committed to secularism there was no separate communal representation for Sikhs. Due to this Akali Dal felt that the Sikhs as a community would have little political leverage. Thus soon after independence, the Akali Leaders started raising apprehension that in an overwhelmingly Hindu-dominated state, with no special political safeguards, the Sikhs as a separate entity would disappear in time. (Rai, 1965). In the pre-partition days, the separate electorate for the Sikhs and reservation of posts in government services had served as a forceful tool and motivation for stressing the distinct and separate identity of the Sikhs. It was feared that in the changed secular atmosphere, the observance of outward physical symbols by the Sikhs, which was a visible symbol of Khalsa distinctness, might get affected. (Kaur, 1992). Thus in the new religious–political context and on the pretext of retaining the district political identity of the Sikh community Akali Dal restored to the demand for the creation of a Sikh majority state within the Indian Union soon after independence. However, it differed from their earlier demand for the creation of a Sikh-majority independent state. The main cause of Sikh uneasiness in free India was the rejection of Sikh claims

by Hindu politicians for separate political representation on the ground that the Sikhs were Hindus and due to the resurgence of Hinduism in independent India, the Sikhs apprehended that they may engulf the minorities. This increasing unorthodoxy among the Sikhs has also been apprehended by many Sikh scholars like Khushwant Singh. (Kapur, 1986).

In the meantime, the language question worsened the political position of Punjab as the language got liked with the communalization of politics in the province. In the ever-growing communal atmosphere, the demand for giving better place to Hindi and Punjabi increasingly gained momentum. (Singh, 1987). This gave rise to an anomalous position in which the spoken language of the region did not get an all-round loyalty from different sections of the people, and could not acquire the status with other languages – like Bengali and Telgu (Rai, 1965) and acquired.

Language, generally, is regarded as a unifying force that cuts across several sectional, sectarian, and communal divisions. In the case of Punjab however, the language question further deepened the existing communal division, which overshadowed the cohesive characteristics of the Punjabis. (Rai, 1965). The decision to change the status of Urdu as the only medium of instruction and to replace it with Hindi and Punjabi was due to the communal atmosphere prevalent in the province and partly an account of the partition of the province since it was no longer a Muslim-majority state. In pursuance of this objective, the education department of the East Punjab Government ordered that

“All education in the schools of East Punjab shall be given in the mother tongue of the children, and either Devnagari or Gurumukhi script can be used in the 1st and 2nd class, provided arrangements be made to teach Gurumukhi in the third class in school where initially Hindi is taught. The same rule is required to be observed in such schools where the initial education was in Gurumukhi.” (Vidyalankar, 1956)

The order contained the seeds of what later came to be known as Sachar Formula.

The language issues assumed its political dimension only in the year 1949, for it was preceded by the demand for the Punjabi-speaking state and other concessions by the Akali Party (Rai, 1965). The question was referred to the Punjab University with the expectation that the academic would find a solution mutually satisfactory to both communities. However, the educationists proved to be as susceptible to political and religious pressures as the politicians. So in the last, the Punjab Government decided to take the matter into its own hands and decide it. On 1st October 1949, the

Punjab Government submitted its proposal popularly known as the Sachar Formula (on language question).

The formula was widely acclaimed by the Sikhs including the Akalis, though they criticized the right of the parent to choose the medium of instruction for the education of their children (Rai, 1965). The proposals, however, met with severe criticism at the hands of Hindu organizations like the Arya Samaj, the Jan Sangh, and the Hindu Mahasabha. The conflict between the Hindus and Sikhs, however, took a sharp turn from this day onward. The Sikhs felt that the Hindus by denying the right of the Punjabi as their mother tongue wanted to gain a position of superiority over them. The Hindu communal organizations, objecting to this right of Punjabi, argued that the government by declaring Gurumukhi as the only script for Punjabis had denied to them their right to name their mother tongue. They declared that they were left with no other alternative but to declare Hindi as their mother tongue. In a heated communal atmosphere, the press carried on the campaign in the bitterest of language. The respective causes of Hindi and Punjabi were vociferously propagated and the dozed observers in the rest of the country saw that this was being carried on in Urdu (Rai, 1965). The question of the language of the state and choice of the medium of instruction in schools may not have been as difficult and complicated issues as they appeared to be, but subsequently it got mixed up with the question of the reorganization of the state which escalated it and made it more complex which led to the demand of Punjabi Suba.

Demand For A Punjabi Suba

The demand for a “Punjabi Suba” was however made in February 1948. “The real motivation for a Punjabi-speaking state came after the failure of the Akali Dal to secure some provisions in the constitution of India in this regard. The Akali Dal in its memorandum to the minority subcommittee of Fundamental Right had demanded a separate communal electorate for the Sikhs; the reservation of 50 percent of the seats in the provincial legislature and 5 percent in the central legislature; reservation of seats in Delhi and U.P.; the same privileges for the scheduled caste Sikhs as are given to other scheduled casts; and statutory reservation of a certain proportion of place in the Army (Singh, 1981). Master Tara Singh, the Akali leader also criticized the Government of India’s policy of not referring the question of demarcating of boundaries of the Punjab to the Dar Commission. Later on undergoing a significant shift in his previous position, he emphasized the importance of preserving their cultural heritage, noting that their literature is in the Gurumukhi script and advocated for the creation of a province where their culture and traditions could be safeguarded (Rai, 1965). Additionally, he asserted the right to self-determination for the Sikh community in

religious, social, political, and other matters. He, however, made it clear that they did not want a separate and independent sovereign state but a province which would be the part of the federal unit.

In its struggle for the achievement of Punjabi Suba, the Akali Dal employed a variety of strategies such as constitutional, infiltration, and agitational (Nayar, 1966). The constitutional strategy involved the use of methods that were within the framework of the existing constitutionally guaranteed rights (Nayar, 1966). Therefore on 15th November 1948, twenty-three Akali legislators resolved that if the five statutory safeguards in their charter of demands were not conceded, the Sikhs should be allowed to form a new province of seven districts, i.e. Hosiarpur, Jalandur, Ludhiana, Ferozepur, Amritsar, Gurdaspur and Amjbalala (Pal, 1979). These demands however were not acceptable to the Congress or the constituent Assembly. Sikhs also were not unanimous in this separatist demand. Even Kartar Singh opposed it by saying that, “the demand was anti-national and harmful to the Sikhs and therefore, (could) not be accommodated in the secular set up of the Indian RepublicBesides it would still further divide the Sikh population in a much worse manner than the partition of the country in 1947 did.” (Rai, 1965).

Whereas the Sikhs were still engaged in the debate regarding Punjabi Suba and its nature, the suspicious, hostile, and rather aggressive attitude of the Hindus, communalists, further complicated the political situation in Punjab. The majority of them were of the opinion that the Muslim league could achieve Pakistan because of the appeasement policy of the Congress. Now that the partition was a fact and a majority of the Muslims had gone over the other side, the government of India should follow a strong policy towards all religious minorities. The Akali demand for a separate Punjabi Suba was interpreted by them as a strategy designed to create a separate Sikh state and the press other than Akali also condemned the move as following the footsteps of the Muslim League (Rai, 1965). In fact, it was the communal leadership of both the communities, which continued the old communal propaganda. Master Tara Singh, however, alleged that the Hindu communal leaders and a particular section of the Hindu press in the Punjab were responsible for the unfortunate situation and were leading the present anti-Sikh agitation.

It is also believed by certain scholars (particularly Khushwant Singh) that, the creation of PEPSU (a Sikh majority state) in 1948 provided an opportunity for meeting the demand by attaching the Sikh majority districts of East Punjab to PEPSU. In addition, the Punjab government's decision to declare Punjab a bilingual state (with Punjabi and Hindi as its languages) gave the Akali the necessary excuse for raising their demand for a Punjabi Suba, since the spoken language of Punjab (except in the Haryana area and

hilly area) was Punjabi. (Singh, 1987). The demand for the creation of a Punjabi-speaking state was further reinforced as a result of the disowning of their mother tongue by large sections of Hindus in the 1951 census. This aroused communal sentiments between the two communities as the Sikh felt that this was a political tactic to resist the demand for the creation of a unilingual Punjabi-speaking state. So the Akali Dal manifesto of the 1952 elections elaborated on the reason for demanding a Punjabi-speaking state. (Singh, 1987). The true test of democracy in the opinion of the Shiromani Akali Dal was “that the minorities should feel that they are really free and equal partners in the destiny of their country:

- i. To bring home this sense of freedom to the Sikhs, it is vital that there should be a Punjabi-speaking province with its own language and culture
- ii. The Shiromani Akali Dal is in favor of the formation of provinces on a linguistic and cultural basis throughout India but it holds that it is a question of life and death for the Sikhs for new Punjab to be created immediately
- iii. The Shromani Akali Dal has reasons to believe that a Punjabi-speaking province may give the Sikhs the needful security. It believes in the Punjabi-speaking province as an autonomous unit of India”.

A further stimulus to the demand for a Punjabi Suba was the creation of the unilingual state of Andhra after the death of Rumulo (who undertook a fast unto death to achieve the aim) in 1953. Several leaders of Punjab after this incident declared to intensify their struggle and even threatened to go on a fast unto death. Although the demand for Punjabi Suba or a Punjabi-speaking state, has been at the forefront of politics in the Punjab since the partition, its first systematic presentation was made before the state Re-organisation commission appointed by the Government of India in 1953, with Syed Fazal Ali as Chairman (and H.N. Kunzru and KM Pannikar as Members).

In a memorandum to the commission, the Akali Dal urged the formation of a Punjabi Suba by merging the Punjabi-speaking areas of Punjab, PEPSU, and Rajasthan on the basis of language. The memorandum emphasized that Punjabis have a distinctive common culture and a common mother tongue and they should therefore have their own state. (Singh, 1981) There was vigorous opposition to the demand of the Punjabi Suba from the Hindu community, the Sikh Harijans, and the nationalist leaders except the communist party of India. The Akali Dal characterized the allegation as unjust and stated that the Sikhs had not asked for Punjabi Suba out of sinister communal motives. They asserted that Sikhs are India's first and last true patriots. Moreover according to Akali Dal Punjabi Suba was not going to be

an independent country, but would be subject to central control.(Nayar, 1966).

After winning the S.G.P.C election in 1953 the issue of a Punjabi Suba the Akali Dal intensified its struggle with renewed vigour. In order to curb the rising demand, the Sachar Ministry imposed a ban on the Punjabi Suba slogan, on the plea that it was endangering communal harmony in the state. The Akali Dal launched an agitation for their freedom. Due to the tremendous resentment against the repressive order government drew this ban on 12th July 1955. This was interpreted as surrender by Sachar and a victory for the Akali. (Nayar, 1966). The state reorganization commission, in its report submitted on September 30th, 1955 rejected the demand for Punjabi Suba on the ground that “a minimum measure of agreement necessary for making a change in the existing set up did not exist”, and expressed the belief that to construct a Punjabi Suba would perhaps mean” the imposition of the will of a to construct a Punjabi Suba would perhaps mean “the imposition of the width of a substantial minority over the majority which was opposed to it.(Nayar, 1966). It instead, recommended the integration of Punjab, PEPSU, and Himachal Pradesh into are administrative unit. The Akali Dal opposed the recommendation of the State Reorganisation Commission tooth and nail.(Kaur, 1992). The Akali Dal alleged that it was a conspiracy to destroy the Sikh nation and that the commission delivered the “Sikh bound hand and foot to the slavery of an aggressively communal group”. (Rai, 1965). Master Tara Singh demanded the report as “a decree of Sikh annihilation” (Singh, 1987). Sardar Hukam Singh another senior leader of the Akali Dal referred to it “as another deadly blow to the Sikhs and threatened that the Akalis would launch an agitation if peaceful negotiation failed.(Kaur, 1992).

In February 1956 Jawaharlal Nehru invited Master Tara Singh for a negotiated settlement so that an amicable solution to this problem could be sorted out. This negotiation resulted in an agreement that came to be known as the “Regional Formula” or Nehru Master Pact. As a result of this agreement, the Regional formula was adopted in the Punjab by which the work of the state legislature was assigned to separate regional committees organized according to language. The Akali Dal agreed to work according to the formula and to merge with the congress party to contest the 1957 election in the Punjab legislature. Meanwhile under this formula on 1st November 1956, PEPSU was merged with Punjab and the overwhelmingly Hindu province of Himachal Pradesh was retained as a separate entity.

However, the Chief Minister, Partap Singh Kairan, under pressure from the Arya Smajist adopted delaying tactics in the implementation of the Regional Formula. The Regional Committees were constituted in November 1957, seven months after the inauguration of the new Assembly. The Chief

Minister denied any special status, establishment, or staff to the chairman of the Punjab Regional Committee, which caused its chairman to resign in disgust. The dissatisfaction with the working of the Regional Formula and the indifferent attitude of Kairan towards the Akali legislators brought the Akali Dal out of the Congress fold. Master Tara Singh, in a statement at Delhi on 15th September 1958 declared that the Regional Formula had not been satisfactorily implemented and that he was compelled to reopen the demand for a Punjabi Suba Disenchanted with the working of the Regional Formula, the Akali Dal convened the first Punjabi Suba conference at Amritsar on 12th October 1958 to revive the demand for a Punjabi Suba. The Akali Leaders (Master Tara Singh and Sant Fateh Singh) were accused. The Government of having backed out of its settlement with the Akalis, and justified their demand for the creation of a Punjabi Suba. (Singh, 1979).

The Punjabi Suba Agitation After 1960

In order to mobilize support from other parties, the Akali Dal convened a Punjabi Suba convention at Amritsar on 22nd May 1960, at which the members of the Swatantra Party, S.S.P., P.S.P. and veteran freedom fighters like Saifud-din Kichlu and Pt. Sunder Lal justified the demand for the creation of the Punjabi-speaking state. The government took preemptive action and arrested Master Tara Singh and the Akali leaders, but the agitation gathered momentum as time passed and was launched by the Akali Dal on 20th May 1960. The Punjab government came down heavily on the agitators who were harassed and terrorized in several ways. (Singh, 1979). Procession and demonstrations became the order of the day and at a massive Akali procession taken out on 12th June 1960 at Delhi to press the demand more than 57,000 volunteers courted arrest. (Paul & Brass, 1974)

Despite this government made no attempt to diffuse the situation. Sant Fateh Singh, Vice President of Akali Dal took over the leadership of the Morcha after the arrest of Master Tara Singh and continued the agitation. In his very first public appearance as the leader of the March cleared the position regarding the nature of the Punjabi Suba by declaring that he was for Punjabi Suba on the basis of language alone, the percentage of Sikhs or Hindus did not matter and he solemnly reiterated his faith in the Hindu Sikh Unity. (Singh, 1987). Sant tried to shed all the suspicion about the communal outlook of the agitation by emphasizing Hindu-Sikh harmony. He brought it in line with the country's commitment to democracy and secularism.

In order to put pressure on the government he embarked on a fast – unto death on 18th December 1960 later on, on the advice of Master Tara Singh, Sant Fateh Singh broke this twenty–two–day fast on 9th January 1961 to negotiate the matter with Nehru. During these negotiations, Sant Fateh

Singh emphasized the linguistic basis of the demand, rather than its communal basis which made Pandit Nehru more sympathetic.

However, nothing came out of the negotiations between the Akali Dal and the Government Master Tara Singh after his release added the communal touch when he declared that the “primary motive for asking for the Suba was to protect the Sikh religion and improve the position of the Sikhs, the language question was secondary. Meanwhile, with the increasing popularity and credibility of Sant Fateh Singh, Master Tara Singh’s hold on the community was loosening. In an effort to revive his lost prestige, he undertook a fast unto death on 15th August 1961 for a Punjabi Suba (Chauhan, 1995). and against the discrimination against Sikhs by the government. However, the government under Nehru refused to be moved on the issue of Punjabi Suba. Finally, he ended his forty-eight days fast when the government agreed to set up a commission to investigate any discrimination against the Sikhs as this was one of the allegations by Master Tara Singh against the government. However, this commission found that there was no basis for any charge of discrimination (Chauhan, 1995).

The failure of the two fasts had deep repercussions on the Sikh community and resulted in the creation of a division in the Akali leadership. For breaking the fast without achieving anything both the leaders were found guilty by Panj Pioras and were ordered to perform religious penance. After this Sant formed a separate Akali Dal in 1962 and challenged the leadership of Master Tara Singh.

Meanwhile, in the wake of the Chinese invasion in October 1962, Sant Fateh Singh suspended the demand for a Punjabi Suba and mobilized defense efforts in the state, and even presented a cheque of Rs. 50000 on behalf of the Akali Dal towards the war efforts. This raised the position of Sant in the overall political sphere. In 1965 he and his followers succeeded in gaining control over the SGPC from Master Tara Singh and took over the leadership of the Sikhs.

In the meantime, significant changes had taken place in the leadership of the congress in Punjab and at the center.(Chauhan, 1995). The new Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri modified the tough line that had been adopted by Nehru, ostensibly on the advice of Kairan. The change of regime at the center brought a favorable climate as the new leaders were more receptive to regional demands, simultaneously the opposition to the creation of a Punjabi Suba also declined as the Hindu leaders urged the creation of a separate Hindu-speaking state of Haryana and hilly area wanted to merge with Himachal.

Meanwhile, to re-establish his declining image, Master Tara Singh activated the demand for a Punjabi-speaking state and put forward the new idea of self-determined political status for the Sikhs within the Indian Union.

A resolution to this effect was passed at the historic General Hari Singh Nalwa Conference held at Ludhiana on 4th July 1965.

Moving the resolution Sardar Gurman Singh declared “This conference recalls that Sikh people agreed to merge into a common India nationality on the explicit understanding of being accorded a constitutional status of co-sharers in the India sovereignty with the major community, which solemn undertaking now stands cynically repudiated by the present rules of India..... This conference, therefore, resolves after careful thought, that there is no alternative left for the Sikh in the interest of self-preservation but to frame their political demand for securing a self-determined political status within the republic of the Union of India”. (Singh, 1979)

This was a shrewd move by Master Tara Singh to outmaneuver Sant Fateh Singh and re-establish himself as the true champion of a Punjabi Suba. Sant Fateh Singh faced the challenge of the Master group very boldly and lost no time in intensifying these efforts for the realization of a Punjabi Suba. He called upon the Union Government to create a Punjabi-speaking state as a large number of states on linguistic basis had already been created. (Singh, 1981)

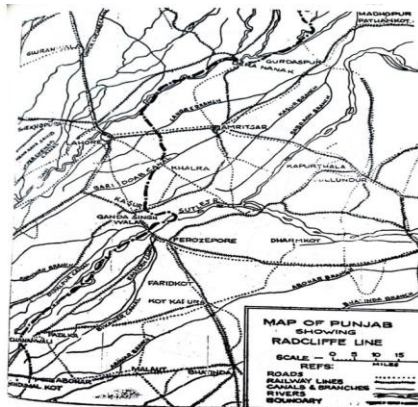
To convince Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri about the urgency for the creation of a Punjabi-speaking state Sant met him on 7th – 8th August 1965 and declared that he wanted a Punjabi Suba purely on a linguistic basis. But talk failed as the Prime Minister agreed only to take steps for the advancement of the Punjabi language and to look into any Sikh grievances but did not concede the real demand.

After the failure of this mission, Sant announced on 16th August 1965 from the Akal Takhat, that he would undertake to fast till death with effect from 10th September 1965, for fifteen days. If he survived the fast he would immolate himself on 25th September at exactly 9:00 A.M. In this, he also got full support from the Master group. Even there was pressure from the Congress Sikh legislators on the central government at this time. The outbreak of the Indo-Pakistan war on 5th September 1965 further precipitated the situation in the border state. The national leaders appealed to the Sant to give up the fast in view of the national emergency and the Union Home Minister announced that the whole question would be favourably considered. On 9th September 1965, the working committee of the Akali Dal advised Sant to postpone the fast till the war with Pakistan was over. After withdrawing his threat of self-immolation, Sant Fateh Singh called upon all Punjabis (and Sikhs in particular) to rise to the defense of the country.

Immediately after the cease-fire with Pakistan, the government of India appointed a three-member cabinet committee, consisting of Y.B. Charan, Indira Gandhi, and Mahavir Tyagi on 23rd September 1965 to

consider the question of the formation of Punjabi Suba. (Singh, 1981). On 9th March 1966, the congress working committee adopted a resolution recommending that out of the existing state of Punjab a state with Punjabi as the state language be formed. On 18th March 1966, Sardar Hukam Singh presented his report to parliament which recommended that the Punjabi-speaking region be constituted into a unilingual Punjabi state that the hill areas be merged with Himachal Pradesh, and that the Haryana region be given the status of a state. The committee recommended the appointment of a commission to demarcate the boundaries between the states of Punjabi Haryana and Himachal.

On 21st March 1966, the central parliament and the cabinet accepted the demand and appointed a boundary commission to propose an appropriate reorganization of the Punjab. The Boundary Commission recommended by a majority of two to one the merger of Kharar Tehsil and Chandigarh with Haryana however Chairman of the Commission S. Dutta favoured the inclusion of these two into Punjab. The government of India accepted the minority report regarding Kharar and decided to convert Chandigarh into a Union Territory. The recommendation of the commission with the above modifications was incorporated in the Punjab State Recognitions Bill which was adopted by Parliament and received the consent of the President on 18th September 1966. As a result of this Act, Punjab has trifurcated in such a way that the Punjabi-speaking areas went to Punjab, the Hindu-speaking areas to Haryana, and the hill areas to Himachal Pradesh. Chandigarh with its neighbouring villages was converted into a Union Territory. Another notable feature of the Act was the creation of common links between the states of Punjab and Haryana like a common governor, High Court, University, Electricity Boards, and other corporations like the state financial corporation and Housing corporations like the state Financial corporation and the Housing Corporation Apart from this, the management of the Bhakra Dam complex and other dams was placed under a centrally administered Board. (Singh, 1981)



Source: Satya M. Rai, Partition of Punjab: A Study on the Politics and Administration of the Punjab 1947-1956, Asian Publication House, New Delhi.



Source: Satya M. Rai, Partition of Punjab: A Study on the Politics and Administration of the Punjab 1947-1956, Asian Publication House, New Delhi.

Maps: Punjab from partition to fragmentation

Conclusion

The Akali Dal in its struggle for the achievement of Punjabi Suba, employed a variety of strategies such as constitutional, infiltration, and agitational. Due to this struggle on 21st March 1966, the central parliament and the cabinet accepted the demand and appointed a boundary commission to propose an appropriate reorganization of the Punjab. As a result of this Act, Punjab was trifurcated in such a way that the Punjabi-speaking areas went to Punjab, the Hindu-speaking areas to Haryana, and the hill areas to Himachal Pradesh. Chandigarh with its neighboring villages was converted into a Union Territory. The demand for the Punjabi Suba was fulfilled, but it led to the fragmentation of Punjab.

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